Prayers for Death and Dying

"The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the Paschal Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope. The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus is 'away from the body and at home with the Lord' (2 Cor 5:8)."
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1681

Prayers with the Dying

The following prayers may be recited with the dying person, alternating with times of silence. Sometimes, the same prayer should be repeated many times. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be are also appropriate. The dying person may be signed on the forehead with the cross, as was done at Baptism.

Short Texts

- What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8:35)
- Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (Rom 14:8)
- We shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes 4:17)
- To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. (Ps 25:1)
- Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. (Ps 23:4)
- Into your hands I commend my spirit. (Ps 31:6a)
- Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. (Lk 23:42)
- Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (Acts 7:59)
- Holy Mary, pray for me.
- Saint Joseph, pray for me.
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Scripture Readings

Among many appropriate Scripture readings are the following:

- Job 19:23-27
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 91
- Psalm 121
- 1 John 4:16
- Revelation 21:1-7
- Matthew 25:1-13
- Luke 22:39-46
- Luke 23:44-49
- Luke 24:1-8
- John 6:37-40
- John 14:16, 23, 27

Those gathered might take turns reading these passages from the family Bible.

Prayer of Commendation

As the time of death approaches, this prayer may be said.

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world
in the name of God the almighty Father,
who created you,
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who suffered for you,
in the name of the Holy Spirit,
who was poured out upon you,
go forth, faithful Christian.

May you live in peace this day,
may your home be with God in Zion,
with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God,
with Joseph, and all the Angels and Saints.

Prayers after Death

Prayer for the Dead

In your hands, O Lord,
we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters.
In this life you embraced them with your tender love;
deliver them now from every evil
and bid them eternal rest.

The old order has passed away:
welcome them into paradise,
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping or pain,
but fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Prayers Immediately after Death

The following prayers may be recited immediately after death and may be repeated in the hours that follow.

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!
Come to meet him/her, Angels of the Lord!

R/. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself;
may Angels lead you to Abraham's side. **R/.**

Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord,
and may your light shine on him/her forever. **R/.**

Let us pray.
All-powerful and merciful God,
we commend to you N., your servant.
In your mercy and love,
blot out the sins he/she has committed
through human weakness.
In this world he/she has died:
let him/her live with you forever.

Through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.

These verses may also be used.

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.
R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.
V/. May he/she rest in peace.
R/. Amen.
V/. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God,
rest in peace.
R/. Amen.

Gathering in the Presence of the Body

When the family first gathers around the body, before or after it is prepared for burial, all or some of the following prayers may be used. It is most fitting that, where possible, family members take part in preparing the body for burial.

All make the Sign of the Cross. Then one member of the family reads:

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says:
"Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened,
and I will give you rest.
Shoulder my yoke and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

The body may then be sprinkled with holy water:

The Lord God lives in his holy temple yet abides in our midst.
Since in Baptism, N. became God's temple
and the Spirit of God lived in him/her,
with reverence we bless his/her mortal body.

Then one member of the family may say:

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption;
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

Then this prayer is said:

Into your hands, O Lord,
we humbly entrust our brother/sister N.
In this life you embraced him/her with your tender love;
deliver him/her now from every evil
and bid him/her enter eternal rest.

The old order has passed away:
welcome him/her then into paradise,
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,
but the fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

All may sign the forehead of the deceased with the Sign of the Cross. One member of the family says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors
for their good deeds go with them.

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.
R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.
V/. May he/she rest in peace.
R/. Amen.
V/. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God,
rest in peace.
R/. Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross as one member of the family says:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
bless and console us
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
R/. Amen.

Prayers for Mourners

- Lord God,
  you are attentive to the voice of our pleading.
  Let us find in your Son
  comfort in our sadness,
  certainty in our doubt,
  and courage to live through this hour.
  Make our faith strong
  through Christ our Lord.
  R/. Amen.

- Lord,
  N. is gone now from this earthly dwelling,
  and has left behind those who mourn his/her absence.
  Grant that we may hold his/her memory dear,
  never bitter for what we have lost
  nor in regret for the past,
  but always in hope of the eternal Kingdom
  where you will bring us together again.
  Through Christ our Lord.
  R/. Amen.

- May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
  bless and console us
  and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
  in the name of the Father,
  and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
  R/. Amen.

For those who mourn the death of a child:

- O Lord, whose ways are beyond understanding,
  listen to the prayers of your faithful people:
  that those weighed down by grief
  at the loss of this little child
  may find reassurance in your infinite goodness.
  Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

Prayers at Graveside

- Lord Jesus Christ,
  by your own three days in the tomb,
  you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you
  and so made the grave a sign of hope
  that promises resurrection
  even as it claims our mortal bodies.

  Grant that our brother/sister, N., may sleep here in peace
  until you awaken him/her to glory,
  for you are the resurrection and the life.
  Then he/she will see you face to face
  and in your light will see light
  and know the splendor of God,
  for you live and reign forever and ever.
  R/. Amen.

- O God,
  by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,
  send your holy Angel to watch over this grave.
  Through Christ our Lord.
  R/. Amen.

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